

Emergency Responder

WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION



WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT

May-June 2001

Earthquake update

The 6.8 magnitude Nisqually Earthquake may not have been the "Big One" among Northwest temblors, but the Feb. 28 earthquake certainly will rewrite the record book for state individual disaster aid.

Among the records set by the Nisqually Disaster as of July 5 were:

- Total disaster registrations of 40,362. Nisqually registrations already exceed the combined total of all of Washington's previous federal disasters.
- Individual assistance program payments of \$48.8 million. The previous record was \$37.3 million set in the 1996 flooding disasters.
- U.S. Small Business Administration loans totaling \$64.6 million. The state's previous record was \$61 million in the 1996 floods.

"This disaster resulted in astonishingly widespread damage," said State Coordinating Officer Diane Offord. "The extent of the damage became evident as declared counties for individual assistance grew from six to 22, and registration numbers reached record-breaking levels. The recovery process is likely to continue for some time."

Two counties—Walla Walla and Douglas—were included in the declaration for public assistance only.

Quick action by state and federal officials helped jump-start the recovery process. The state received a presidential disaster declaration within a day, and the first temporary disaster housing checks were cut by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) within five days.

The first checks for low-interest disaster loans went out within a week of the declaration, according to U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Official Rick Jenkins.

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Maj. Gen. Timothy J. Lowenberg, Washington Military Department director and state adjutant general, applauds the efforts of some of the public servants who made Ocean Shores, Wash., the nation's first "Tsunami Ready Community" during a June 30 ocean-side ceremony. The popular resort town was also recognized as a "Storm Ready Community." Both awards were bestowed by officials from the National Weather Service who touted Ocean Shores' operational community notification system, evacuation plan and ongoing public education program to inform citizens and visitors how to respond to tsunami and storm hazards. With Lowenberg are [l. to r.] Ocean Shores Police Chief Rich McEachin, Ocean Shores Mayor Peter Jordan, Grays Harbor Emergency Management Deputy Director Karin Frinell-Hanrahan and Grays Harbor County Commissioner Dan Wood. [Photo by Max Messman, WSEM.]

Revamped state committee takes on seismic priorities

The Emergency Management Council's (EMC) Committee on Seismic Safety resumed work in June with new members and committee chairs.

Commissioner of Public Lands Doug Sutherland and Mason County Commissioner Mary Jo Cady will serve as the new committee chairpersons. They will preside over a new 29-member standing committee.

"The council wants the seismic safety committee to energetically develop priorities and recommendations that can be acted upon by state agencies and legislators to better prepare us for our significant earthquake hazard," said Glen Woodbury, Washington Emergency Management

Division director.

Woodbury said one of the committee's first tasks would be to provide guidance to the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program that could have upwards of \$20 million from the Nisqually Earthquake for local mitigation project grants next year.

The committee also must review the statewide mitigation priorities in the 1998 "Earthquake Safety in Washington State" report, he said. "The committee will need to reassess the report's priorities, solicit new ideas from state and local agencies, and forward new or revised policy

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Hocutt retires after 47 years of public service

Jimmie Hocutt, state communications and warning officer, and telecommunications section supervisor, retired July 1, 2001, after more than 22 years with the Washington Emergency Management Division. He actually completed 47 years of public service on that date, as he served 24 years in the U.S. Air Force prior to working for the state.

During his tenure, Hocutt was directly involved in nearly all aspects of emergency communication, not only for the new State Emergency Operations Center (EOC), but for many local jurisdictions, as well. He says his proudest achievement was the role he played in helping the state duty officer system get 24-hour staffing. The 1983 initiative was finally approved and funded in 1994. Vying for second on his list are the information technology capabilities of the State EOC, and the “hot” cut-over of the duty officer system when the division moved from Olympia to its new location at Camp Murray.

Quick to point out that teamwork makes for success, Hocutt says he has had the best team members in EMD’s Telecommunications Section. He also notes that ongoing support from management helped tremendously in the success he enjoyed.

Following the eruption of Mt. St. Helens in 1981, Hocutt worked closely with the broadcast industry, members of the Legislature and the Governor’s Office to fund and implement the state’s first real Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) capability which was recognized by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as one of the best at the time. He was commended by the FCC and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for his later role as vice-chair of the State Emergency Communications Committee, which worked with the broadcast industry to replace EBS with the Emergency Alert System (EAS).

A strong supporter of the Washington State Emergency Management Association, Hocutt also advocated making everyone in the state’s emergency management community eligible to be a member. He has been an active member of the Association of Public Communications Officials (APCO), serving two terms as president, working on numerous committees and representing his chapter on the International Executive Council for five years.

Hocutt has a drawer full of thank-you letters from people throughout the state involved in emergency management, including all the governors who held office during his tenure for outstanding efforts such as providing top notch telecommunications during disasters, helping jurisdictions get federal funding, implementing new procedures, building an EOC locally, or just speaking at special occasions.

“It’s time to play,” says Hocutt. His immediate plans include an August trip to Salt Lake City to accept an International Lifetime Membership Award at the annual APCO International Symposium and Exhibition, a trip to a family reunion in Alabama, and a November cruise to the Caribbean.

“After that we’ll take a deep breath,” Hocutt says, “and start making new travel plans.”

Outlook for state’s tri-fold hazards slightly improved but still a concern

The outlook for Washington’s energy, wildfire and drought hazards has improved a little for this summer, but the threesome will continue to pose challenges through fall and winter, according to the Washington Emergency Management Division’s June hazard analysis.

Energy

The Columbia Generating Station’s nuclear power plant (1150 MW) was down for refueling in June. Encouraging fish migration patterns will increase competition with energy production for available upstream water. Difficult resource allocation decisions will continue because of water levels behind dams are inadequate to support agriculture, power generation and fish migrations.

The likelihood of blackouts for the remainder of the year have been significantly reduced by redistribution and conservation efforts. The “real” energy problem could arrive in January/February of 2002 as water used to generate power during the summer of 2001 is no longer available, especially if there is a colder-than-normal winter. Current statewide conservation efforts will pay big dividends later.

Wildfire

Lightning and human actions have caused several fires already. April rain helped with a “green up” effect, which should mean reduced danger of wildfires until late June or early July, at which time the danger should significantly increase. Precipitation during May was slightly below normal levels.

Historically, people have caused 85% of wildfires on private and state-owned lands; continued public awareness is advised. The intensity and duration of the summer weather patterns plus public precautionary measures will ultimately determine the severity of the wildfire season. Rural fire districts are on high alert.

Drought

Even with nearly normal rainfall in May and June, drought remains a high risk for the state in the near-term. The agricultural community is most vulnerable to economic hardships caused by water shortages, rising energy, labor, food processing and storage costs. Increased public conservation, and proactive business and government mitigation measures will help lessen the severity of the drought.

Earthquake update

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"Thanks to the exceptional partnership between the state and FEMA, we were able to help people start rebuilding for the future right away," said Federal Coordinating Officer Bill Lokey. "We've learned, during this recovery process that, although earthquake damages can be difficult to detect, they still can be dangerous. So people should rebuild wisely and take measures now to protect their property from future earthquakes."

In fact, 50 percent of the individual property damage caused by the Nisqually Quake was to chimneys. Although chimney damage may seem minor, it can be fatal. As people rebuild for the future, officials urge them to keep in mind another earthquake of unknown magnitude could occur at any time, and it is wise to use techniques now to lessen damages.

"When you do something now to protect your property from future disaster damage, you save money," said Lokey. "It costs more to recover from a disaster as it does to prepare for one."

For the designated counties the total number of applicants and assistance approved through July 5 for temporary disaster rental assistance, minimal repair grants and low-interest disaster loans are:

<u>County</u>	<u>Registrations</u>	<u>Approved Temporary</u>	<u>SBA Approved</u>
		<u>Housing Assistance</u>	<u>Disaster Loans</u>
Benton	46	\$62,466	\$35,200
Chelan	122	\$78,487	\$40,200
Clallam	126	\$108,940	\$59,900
Clark	191	\$200,676	\$188,200
Cowlitz	143	\$251,560	\$234,400
Grays Harbor	2,027	\$3,076,892	\$1,418,000
Island	112	\$123,061	\$162,000
Jefferson	95	\$113,312	\$106,600
King	15,910	\$17,518,980	\$32,269,900
Kitsap	2,603	\$3,006,454	\$3,865,000
Kittitas	105	\$99,779	\$44,300
Lewis	1,199	\$1,685,314	\$1,793,200
Mason	787	\$1,035,506	\$1,027,000
Pacific	226	\$424,487	\$77,200
Pierce	8,218	\$10,313,751	\$9,341,600
Skagit	400	\$445,154	\$718,400
Skamania	7	\$8,859	\$3,000
Snohomish	1,504	\$1,079,481	\$1,466,200
Thurston	5,334	\$5,308,810	\$11,262,800
Wahkiakum	30	\$51,614	\$36,300
Whatcom	696	\$672,787	\$333,300
Yakima	452	\$452,205	\$231,200

Individuals who still have unmet disaster needs should contact the American Red Cross at 1-800-660-4124 or the Washington Faith-Based Earthquake Recovery Project at 1-888-707-1200.

Those affected who have already registered but have questions about their applications should call the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-525-0321. Lines are open 5 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week.

Persons who did not register by the June 30 deadline should call the FEMA registration number 1-800-462-9029 and get instructions on writing a letter of explanation for the missed deadline. The applicant must supply a good valid reason with documentation.

Revamped state committee

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recommendations to the EMC."

Members of the new Seismic Safety Committee are the Department of Natural Resources, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Association of Washington Cities, Association of Washington Counties, Department of Transportation, Washington Emergency Management Division, University of Washington (state seismologist), Washington State Emergency Management Association, Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (Growth Management), Emergency Management Council—building officials, and the departments of Health, Ecology and Information Services.

Other members include Washington Association of Hospitals, Cascadia Region Earthquake Work Group, Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, Office of Insurance Commissioner, American Society of Civil Engineers, Structural Engineers Association of Washington, Washington State Patrol, Washington Public Ports Association, state/local Tsunami Work Group, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Geologic Survey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Pacific Northwest Marine Environmental Laboratory, Infrastructure Assistance Coordinators Council, Office of Financial Management Policy and Budget, Association of Washington Business, and County Road Administration Board.

EMD workers honored for service longevity

Four Washington Emergency Management Division employees have been honored for their years in public service. **Robert Harper** received a certificate for 20 years of service for the state as a public information officer. Receiving 10-year certificates were **John Vollmer**, Individual Assistance Officer; **Marty Best**, Hazard Mitigation Officer; and **Curt Kyle**, Telecommunications Officer.

State personnel

Several Emergency Management Division (EMD) employees have been promoted this summer. **Don Miller** was selected as Telecommunications Section Supervisor, replacing the retiring Jimmie Hocutt (see page 2). At the Disaster Field Office (DFO) in Olympia, **Joan Sterling** was promoted to Hazard Mitigation Section Supervisor, **Alan Steele** to program coordinator, **Hieke Syben-Garcia** to program assistant, and **Jenn Watson** to office assistant senior.

EMD welcomed numerous new employees recently. In the Operations Unit, **Tim Palmer** is the new Information Systems Network Manager and **Suzi Cherry** is a Secretary Senior. **Eric Moore** is a volunteer in Plans, Exercise, Education and Training. The following employees will be at the DFO: **Tammi Clark**, **Jimmy Gee**, **Paul McNeil**, **Luke Meyers**, **Patti Miller-Crowley**, **Melanie Quimby**, **Valeria Brown**, **Lori Guerrero**, **Virginia Haas**, **Evelyn Peters**, **Dick Kay**, **San Dee Stewart**, **Lynden Long** and **Diana Staley**.

Three staff accepted promotions in June with other state agencies—**Laura VanderMeer** in the fiscal office of the Washington Military Department, **Don Stoll** on special projects for the Department of Transportation, and **Valjean Merill** with the Department of Labor and Industries.

Fire experts train firefighters

Training new firefighters was the goal at the Western Washington Interagency Guard School in Graham, Wash., June 25-29. Doug Sutherland, commissioner of Public Lands and former smokejumper, and Ron DeHart, fire information officer, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, hosted opening ceremonies for 187 firefighting trainees.

Guard School simulates actual fire camp operations for wildland fire suppression using the Incident Management System. Incident Commanders were Rick Dahl of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Dick Olsen of the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

"This training is a joint effort and we began initial planning meetings in January," said Dahl. In addition to the USFS and DNR, other agencies helping to make the training possible were the state Department of Ecology, Olympic and Gifford Pinchot National Forests, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Fort Lewis Forestry Department, and fire departments from around western Washington.

Instruction and hands-on training covered fire behavior and fire weather, map reading, site location, use of fire tools and equipment, hazardous materials, and fire suppression techniques, including a controlled burn. Fire safety skills were reinforced throughout training.

Workshops set for fall

Disaster Recovery Workshops are set for eastern and western Washington sites for this September.

The one-and-a-half day workshops will provide an overview of individual assistance, public assistance and hazard mitigation programs. Instruction will highlight the responsibilities of state and local governments in the process of requesting and receiving federal disaster aid.

The workshops will be Sept. 17-18 at Camp Murray and Sept. 19-20 in Moses Lake. For information, contact Rosanne Garrand, EMD training coordinator, at (253) 512-7048.

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